Leviticus, Leadership, and LGBTQ Identity: Twelve Public Figures and the Religious Groups That Oppose Them

Douglas C. Youvan

doug@youvan.com

www.youvan.ai

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The intersection of religious doctrine and LGBTQ identity remains one of the most contested moral terrains of modern society. In particular, passages from the biblical Book of Leviticus—namely Leviticus 18:22 and Leviticus 20:13—are frequently invoked by individuals and institutions that oppose same-sex relationships. This paper examines twelve prominent figures in the technology sector who are publicly known to identify as gay or lesbian, alongside the religious groups that cite Leviticus to oppose such identities. The paper contextualizes these biblical verses, explores various interpretive traditions within Judaism and Christianity, and identifies specific religious institutions and doctrinal bodies that still invoke these verses in the modern public square. At stake is not merely a theological debate but a cultural and institutional collision between ancient textual authority and contemporary values of inclusion. By naming names and citing scripture directly, this paper offers clarity for scholars of religion, ethics, law, and public policy navigating the volatile discourse on LGBTQ rights, religious freedom, and the boundaries of scriptural application in pluralistic societies.

Keywords: Leviticus, homosexuality, LGBTQ, religious opposition, evangelical, Orthodox Judaism, Southern Baptist, tech industry, Tim Cook, Peter Thiel, Sam Altman, Christian ethics, sexual morality, biblical literalism

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1. Introduction

The interface between ancient religious scripture and modern moral discourse has become one of the most complex battlegrounds in contemporary culture, especially around the subject of LGBTQ identity. The rise of openly gay leaders across influential sectors—including technology—has prompted renewed theological reflection and often sharp denunciation from religious conservatives. Among the most frequently cited scriptural justifications for opposing same-sex relationships are a pair of verses from the Book of Leviticus, part of the Hebrew Bible and the Christian Old Testament. These texts, originating in a vastly different cultural and historical context, have been reinterpreted, rejected, or reinforced depending on doctrinal commitments and denominational worldviews.

This paper focuses on the tension between these enduring scriptural citations and the public lives of twelve openly gay figures in the global tech industry. It aims to lay bare the explicit claims of both sides—not in the spirit of provocation, but in pursuit of clarity. In doing so, it names both individuals and the groups that formally or informally invoke Leviticus as grounds for opposition. This opening section situates the discussion within the broader discourse of religious authority, public ethics, and societal transformation.

1.1 Background: Religious Texts and Contemporary Moral Discourse

Religious texts serve as repositories of moral law, cultural identity, and communal memory. For millennia, Judaism and Christianity have drawn legal and ethical authority from the Hebrew Bible. Yet in the modern era—especially following the Enlightenment, the rise of secular states, and the expansion of civil rights—religious codes have increasingly come into tension with prevailing moral frameworks. Nowhere is this more visible than in debates over gender and sexuality.

Modern LGBTQ rights movements have pushed institutions to reckon with their historical doctrines. In some denominations, this has led to full affirmation and reform. In others, particularly those with literalist or inerrantist views of scripture, resistance has hardened. As cultural acceptance of LGBTQ individuals has grown, so too has the moral weight placed upon religious institutions to either maintain traditional prohibitions or reinterpret them in light of contemporary understanding.

Scripture, in this context, becomes more than ancient literature—it becomes a flashpoint for cultural struggle. The Book of Leviticus, in particular, offers a distinct window into how legal codes from antiquity are still employed to shape contemporary moral judgments.

1.2 Leviticus as Focal Point for Anti-LGBTQ Interpretation

Leviticus 18:22 states: *"You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination."* Leviticus 20:13 adds: *"If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them."*

These verses, situated in a priestly holiness code, are among the most frequently cited by those who oppose male homosexual behavior. Unlike many other biblical texts that are metaphorical or narrative-driven, these verses are legalistic, direct, and categorical. For some religious groups, this clarity gives them ultimate authority in moral matters. For others, especially theologians and scholars operating within more liberal hermeneutical traditions, the verses are contextual, culture-bound, and non-binding in a modern ethical framework.

Regardless of interpretive stance, Leviticus remains a central citation in public discourse surrounding LGBTQ issues. It is invoked in political campaigns, legal arguments, denominational statements, and pastoral teachings. Its power lies not only in the starkness of its prohibition, but also in its perceived immutability by those who claim that divine law does not change with cultural tides.

1.3 Scope of the Paper and Rationale for Naming Individuals

This paper does not aim to adjudicate religious truth. Instead, it examines the social and theological reality that public figures—especially those in highly visible leadership positions—are often treated as symbolic flashpoints for deeper moral debates. The twelve individuals named in this paper are all openly gay, hold or have held executive or founding roles in the global technology sector, and have been recognized publicly for their contributions. Their sexuality is not incidental in this analysis—it is part of what draws religious scrutiny and moral commentary from groups that claim scriptural authority.

Naming these individuals is not intended to "call them out," but to "call attention to" a persistent pattern: religious opposition frequently targets not merely ideas, but people. In documenting both the lives of these individuals and the groups that cite Leviticus to oppose them, the paper adopts a dual purpose: to clarify the logic of opposition, and to illuminate the real-world stakes of moral interpretation.

The paper further outlines twelve major religious bodies, coalitions, or traditions that continue to publicly or doctrinally oppose same-sex sexual relationships based on the authority of Leviticus. These include both Christian and Jewish groups, spanning fundamentalist, orthodox, evangelical, and traditionalist perspectives. Through this dual lens—the named individual and

the named institution—the paper builds a concrete, comparative view of the cultural and ethical fault lines still shaping public discourse in the 21st century.

2. The Biblical Text in Question

The central verses in Leviticus most frequently cited in opposition to same-sex male relationships are Leviticus 18:22 and Leviticus 20:13. These passages are part of a broader set of legal and ritual instructions commonly referred to as the *Holiness Code* (Leviticus chapters 17–26). Their language is stark and absolute, and they have been repeatedly invoked in both religious and political contexts. Understanding their wording and historical framing is crucial to analyzing how and why they continue to be deployed against LGBTQ individuals today.

2.1 Leviticus 18:22 – "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination."

This verse is terse, categorical, and unqualified in its Hebrew form. It appears within a list of prohibited sexual relationships, including incest, bestiality, and adultery. The key term—translated in most English versions as "abomination"—is the Hebrew word *toʿevah*, which refers to something ritually detestable or taboo, often in a cultic or idolatrous context. This term is not used uniformly across the Bible and should not be assumed to carry the same weight in every context. Nevertheless, for many religious literalists, this verse offers what they see as clear divine prohibition.

Those who interpret this passage as universally binding often argue that it reflects an eternal moral law. They point to its placement among laws concerning family structure, sexual purity, and societal stability. Others, however, challenge this interpretation by noting the absence of any corresponding condemnation of female same-sex relations in this chapter, suggesting a culturally specific and possibly patriarchal framing.

2.2 Leviticus 20:13 – "If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them."

This verse repeats the core condemnation of male same-sex intercourse but adds a judicial punishment: death. In doing so, it transitions from ritual taboo to civil penalty. Importantly, this penalty is prescribed in the context of Israelite theocracy—where religious, civil, and ritual laws were inseparable. The phrase "their blood is upon them" echoes other capital punishments in Levitical and Deuteronomic law, and implies communal moral responsibility for purging evil from the camp.

This verse has been central in arguments against decriminalization of homosexuality in certain conservative religious circles. Even when those groups no longer advocate for literal enforcement of the death penalty, they often retain this verse's language to emphasize the perceived gravity of the offense. However, modern biblical scholars point out that many offenses punishable by death in the Torah—such as working on the Sabbath, disobeying one's parents, or eating leaven during Passover—are no longer seen as morally or legally actionable even in the most conservative Jewish or Christian communities. This selective application is itself a subject of theological debate.

2.3 Historical and Literary Context of Levitical Law

The Book of Leviticus is part of the Pentateuch, traditionally attributed to Moses, but now understood by most scholars as a composite work shaped over centuries. Leviticus served as a priestly manual for the Israelite community, offering rituals for sacrifice, laws for purity, and ethical guidelines aimed at preserving holiness in every dimension of life. The term "holiness" (*qadosh*) in Leviticus does not simply mean moral goodness, but separateness—an intentional distinction between Israel and surrounding nations.

The Holiness Code (Leviticus 17–26) was likely compiled during or after the Babylonian exile, at a time when Israelite identity was under threat. Scholars argue that many of its prohibitions—including those against certain sexual behaviors—served not just religious purposes but nationalistic ones. Same-sex male intercourse, for instance, may have been associated with foreign cultic practices or with breaches in lineage, inheritance, and patriarchal structure.

Importantly, Levitical law also contains numerous commandments that few, if any, modern religious communities treat as binding—such as prohibitions on mixed fabrics, dietary restrictions, and regulations about bodily discharges. The interpretive task, then, involves determining which laws are viewed as eternally moral and which are considered obsolete, ceremonial, or culturally contingent. Different denominations draw this line in very different places, and Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 sit precisely on that contested boundary.

3. Twelve Public LGBTQ Figures in Tech

The tech industry has long positioned itself as a frontier of innovation—not only in terms of technology but also in cultural and workplace norms. In this space, openly LGBTQ leaders have emerged as influential voices not just for their entrepreneurial and technical acumen but also for their public presence as symbols of inclusion. The following twelve individuals represent a spectrum of roles across the tech landscape, including CEOs, founders, investors, and thought

leaders. Each has publicly identified as gay or queer, and their careers intersect with public discourse about morality, representation, and authority. In religious communities that continue to cite Leviticus as a basis for opposition to same-sex relationships, these individuals often become unintentional symbols in a broader moral narrative.

3.1 Tim Cook – CEO, Apple

Tim Cook became the first openly gay CEO of a Fortune 500 company when he publicly came out in 2014. As the head of Apple, one of the most valuable and visible companies in the world, Cook's announcement marked a watershed moment in corporate diversity and LGBTQ representation. His decision to come out was framed as a personal act of service to others, and he has since become a vocal advocate for equality, privacy rights, and workplace inclusion.

3.2 Sam Altman – CEO, OpenAI

Sam Altman, one of the most influential figures in artificial intelligence, is openly gay and has spoken publicly about his identity. As the CEO of OpenAI, he stands at the center of global debates on the future of AI, ethics, and existential risk. Altman's public relationship with software engineer Oliver Mulherin has occasionally been mentioned in press coverage, highlighting the normalization of LGBTQ leadership even in the most cutting-edge sectors.

3.3 Peter Thiel – Cofounder, Palantir and PayPal

Peter Thiel has long been one of the most enigmatic figures in Silicon Valley. As a cofounder of PayPal and Palantir and the first outside investor in Facebook, Thiel is also one of the few openly gay conservatives in tech. He made headlines in 2016 when he declared at the Republican National Convention, "I am proud to be gay." His alignment with traditionally anti-LGBTQ political forces has sparked complex debates around identity, ideology, and allegiance.

3.4 Chris Hughes – Cofounder, Facebook

Chris Hughes was one of the original four cofounders of Facebook. After leaving the company, he became an advocate for economic justice and co-founded the Economic Security Project. He has been openly gay for much of his public life and is married to political activist Sean Eldridge. Hughes has written extensively about inequality, including the intersection of capitalism and moral responsibility—topics that occasionally touch on his identity.

3.5 Arlan Hamilton – Founder, Backstage Capital

Arlan Hamilton is a Black lesbian venture capitalist who founded Backstage Capital to invest in underrepresented founders. Coming from a background of financial struggle and homelessness, her rise in tech investing is a story of resilience and disruption. Hamilton's identity has been central to her mission: she challenges both the startup funding landscape and the cultural homogeneity of Silicon Valley.

3.6 Ann Mei Chang – CEO, Candid

Ann Mei Chang is a technologist and author who has held senior innovation roles at Google, the U.S. State Department, and USAID. As CEO of Candid, a nonprofit that provides data on the social sector, Chang continues to blend technology and public service. She is openly lesbian and has spoken about the challenges and opportunities of being a queer Asian-American woman in tech and public leadership.

3.7 Peter Arvai – Executive Chair, Prezi

Peter Arvai, cofounder and former CEO of Prezi, publicly came out in 2015 and is recognized as the first openly gay CEO in Hungary. His leadership combined visual communication innovation with advocacy for inclusive workplaces. Arvai has also spoken out against rising homophobia in Central Europe, linking his identity to broader democratic and human rights concerns.

3.8 Gina Trapani – Founder, Lifehacker

Gina Trapani is a developer, writer, and the original founder of Lifehacker, a productivity-focused tech blog. She later went on to co-lead Postlight, a digital product studio. Trapani is openly gay and often weaves issues of inclusion, ethics, and user-centric design into her public discourse. Her work has influenced both the culture of tech blogging and the infrastructure of web development.

3.9 David Bohnett – Founder, GeoCities

David Bohnett created GeoCities, one of the first major platforms for user-generated websites, and sold it to Yahoo! in 1999. He later founded the David Bohnett Foundation, which funds LGBTQ rights, public policy, and social justice initiatives. Bohnett lives openly as a gay man and

has become one of the most influential philanthropists at the intersection of technology and civil rights.

3.10 Claudia Brind-Woody – VP, IBM

Claudia Brind-Woody is Vice President and Managing Director for Global Intellectual Property at IBM. She has been a strong advocate for LGBTQ inclusion in corporate environments and serves as a role model for lesbian executives. Brind-Woody frequently speaks on diversity, leadership, and the evolving role of women and minorities in the global tech workforce.

3.11 Peter Sisson – CEO, CertifyIt

Peter Sisson has led multiple startups, including Line2 and Yaza, and is now CEO of CertifyIt. In interviews and public appearances, he has spoken candidly about being a gay entrepreneur and the shifting cultural acceptance within startup ecosystems. Sisson's identity is part of his broader message about authenticity, leadership, and building sustainable companies.

3.12 Tim Gill – Founder, Quark and Gill Foundation

Tim Gill is best known for founding Quark, a pioneer in desktop publishing. After amassing significant wealth, he created the Gill Foundation, one of the largest funders of LGBTQ rights in the United States. Gill has been instrumental in political advocacy, from marriage equality to nondiscrimination protections. His work represents the full synthesis of tech success and social impact rooted in personal identity.

4. Religious Groups Citing Leviticus in Opposition

While theological diversity abounds across faith traditions, a number of religious institutions continue to cite Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 as foundational proof texts for opposition to same-sex relationships. This opposition may be expressed in doctrinal statements, official church policies, legal advocacy, or public preaching. Although approaches and emphasis vary, these groups share a reliance on scriptural authority—particularly the holiness code in Leviticus—as a basis for affirming a heterosexual norm and opposing LGBTQ inclusion. This section profiles twelve such groups, outlining their positions and methods of appeal to Levitical law.

4.1 Southern Baptist Convention

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the largest Protestant denomination in the United States, has consistently maintained that homosexual conduct is sinful and incompatible with biblical teaching. In official resolutions, SBC leaders have cited Leviticus 18:22 explicitly as part of a broader case for traditional sexual morality. The denomination has opposed same-sex marriage, LGBTQ clergy, and nondiscrimination laws that protect gender and sexual minorities. While many SBC churches frame their position as one of "loving the sinner, hating the sin," the theological foundation is rooted in an inerrant reading of scripture, including Leviticus.

4.2 Orthodox Rabbinical Councils

Within Judaism, Orthodox rabbinical bodies continue to affirm Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 as binding halakha (Jewish law). Organizations such as the Rabbinical Council of America and various haredi (ultra-Orthodox) groups uphold a literal interpretation of the Torah's prohibition on male same-sex intercourse. While some communities have discussed pastoral responses to LGBTQ Jews—especially in cases of mental health or alienation—the legal prohibition remains unchanged. Levitical law, in this context, is not seen as optional but as divine commandment within a covenantal framework.

4.3 Seventh-day Adventist General Conference

The global leadership of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has issued formal statements affirming that marriage is between one man and one woman and that homosexual behavior is inconsistent with biblical teaching. While the denomination often emphasizes compassion, it appeals to Leviticus as part of its broader doctrine on sexual purity and prophetic ethics. The Adventist stance reflects a high regard for Old Testament law, particularly in moral matters.

4.4 Evangelical Free Church of America

The Evangelical Free Church of America (EFCA) holds to the authority of scripture and asserts that same-sex sexual activity is sinful. Though not as politically vocal as other evangelical groups, the EFCA includes Leviticus 18:22 in its doctrinal training and pastoral guidance materials. The church teaches that believers should abstain from any sexual activity outside of heterosexual marriage, and positions same-sex attraction as something to be resisted rather than embraced.

4.5 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS/Mormon)

The LDS Church teaches that same-sex relationships are contrary to God's plan for humanity. While it no longer advocates for criminal penalties, it upholds a strict heterosexual norm for relationships and eternal family structure. The church often references the moral codes of the Old Testament—including Leviticus—as evidence of timeless sexual ethics. Though the LDS framework also includes additional scripture (e.g., the Book of Mormon), it treats Leviticus as part of the broader Christian canon to which it is accountable.

4.6 Assemblies of God USA

The Assemblies of God, a major Pentecostal denomination, affirms that scripture prohibits homosexual behavior, explicitly citing Leviticus as part of its doctrinal foundation. Its position paper on human sexuality references both Old and New Testament texts to assert a divine design for sexuality and gender. Ministers are prohibited from performing or endorsing same-sex marriages, and members are expected to conform to traditional sexual ethics.

4.7 Russian Orthodox Church

The Russian Orthodox Church is one of the most vocally anti-LGBTQ religious institutions in the world. It has leveraged both Levitical language and broader biblical framing to oppose same-sex marriage, LGBTQ pride events, and gender fluidity. Patriarchal authority and national religious identity are deeply intertwined in this tradition, with Leviticus providing part of the theological justification for viewing homosexuality as morally degenerate and culturally subversive.

4.8 African Anglican Coalitions (e.g., Church of Uganda)

Many Anglican churches in sub-Saharan Africa have taken strong stances against LGBTQ rights, especially in opposition to Western Anglican provinces that support inclusion. The Church of Uganda, for example, has explicitly cited Leviticus in condemning same-sex relationships and supporting criminalization in national law. For these churches, Leviticus is viewed not only as religious authority but also as moral foundation for national legislation and cultural norms.

4.9 Orthodox Presbyterian Church

This conservative Reformed denomination adheres strictly to the Westminster Confession and treats scripture as the infallible word of God. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) teaches

that homosexual conduct is sinful and unacceptable for church leaders or members. Leviticus 18 and 20 are used in theological education and pastoral counseling to establish the biblical case against same-sex activity, with emphasis on continuity between Old Testament moral law and Christian ethics.

4.10 Islamic Juristic Traditions Citing Torah Precedents

Although the Qur'an is the primary scripture in Islam, many Islamic legal traditions recognize Torah texts as *previous revelation* (*tawrat*) and cite them in jurisprudential contexts. Some classical Islamic scholars have used Leviticus to reinforce condemnations of same-sex relations, especially when discussing shared Abrahamic moral codes. In nations governed by Islamic law, these citations are sometimes invoked to add scriptural weight to legal prohibitions and public policy.

4.11 Independent Baptist Churches

Thousands of independent Baptist churches across the U.S. and abroad maintain traditionalist views on sexuality, often shaped by King James Version literalism. Leviticus is commonly quoted in sermons, tracts, and pastoral counseling as evidence of God's unchanging standard. These churches often operate without centralized oversight, which allows for more extreme interpretations and public rhetoric, including calls for re-criminalization of same-sex acts in civil law.

4.12 Pentecostal Holiness Denominations

Groups such as the International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC) and the Church of God (Cleveland, TN) reject same-sex relationships as sinful, frequently invoking Leviticus as part of their holiness teaching. These denominations emphasize sanctification, bodily purity, and spiritual warfare, framing homosexual behavior as incompatible with a life of holiness. Levitical laws are presented not as obsolete but as early expressions of a divine moral code that remains in effect.

5. Modern Interpretations and Rebuttals

While Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 have long been cited as prohibitions against same-sex male intimacy, they do not go unchallenged. A range of modern interpretations—both within Judaism and Christianity—seek to contextualize, reinterpret, or repudiate these verses in light of history, theology, and lived experience. These responses are not uniform but form a spectrum: from distinguishing between moral and ceremonial law, to broader covenantal frameworks that redefine the authority and applicability of ancient texts. Increasingly, entire denominations and communities of faith embrace LGBTQ inclusion not in spite of scripture, but as a deeper reading of its message.

5.1 The Moral vs. Ceremonial Law Distinction

One of the most common interpretive strategies among Christian theologians who wish to retain biblical authority while affirming LGBTQ individuals is to distinguish between *moral* laws and *ceremonial* laws. Under this view, certain Old Testament laws—like prohibitions on pork, mixed fabrics, or menstrual impurity—are considered ceremonial and no longer binding under the New Covenant established by Jesus. Moral laws, on the other hand, are seen as timeless expressions of divine will.

Critics of this distinction argue that it is often inconsistently applied and that Leviticus provides no internal categorization of its laws. Still, this framework remains influential, especially in denominations that wish to affirm the authority of scripture while discarding penalties or taboos deemed obsolete. Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 are thus frequently debated: are they part of a permanent moral code, or a context-bound ceremonial system designed to distinguish Israel from its neighbors?

5.2 Reform and Conservative Jewish Reinterpretations

Within Judaism, Leviticus is central to halakhic (legal) reasoning, yet modern movements have reinterpreted its application. Reform Judaism explicitly affirms LGBTQ equality and permits same-sex marriage and ordination of LGBTQ clergy. In this tradition, Leviticus is read as a product of its time—a ritual purity code that no longer governs contemporary Jewish ethics.

Conservative Judaism, while more traditional in practice, has also evolved. In 2006, the Rabbinical Assembly's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards adopted a responsum permitting the ordination of openly gay and lesbian rabbis and the celebration of same-sex commitment ceremonies. Though Leviticus 18:22 was acknowledged as Torah, its interpretation was re-examined through the lens of evolving halakhic priorities, such as dignity (*kavod ha-*

briyot) and communal justice. The shift was not merely social but rooted in a rebalancing of legal values within the tradition.

5.3 Christian Theological Dissent: Context, Covenant, and Christ

Progressive Christian scholars often challenge the authority of Levitical prohibitions on theological and historical grounds. One line of argument emphasizes the covenantal shift introduced by Jesus, wherein the Old Law is fulfilled and reinterpreted. Under this view, Leviticus remains part of sacred history but is not a rulebook for modern Christian ethics.

Others argue from context: that the Levitical prohibitions addressed specific cultural threats (such as pagan cultic sex acts or violations of patriarchal lineage systems) rather than loving, consensual same-sex relationships as understood today. They also point to Jesus' silence on homosexuality and his frequent challenges to legalism in favor of love, mercy, and inclusion.

Moreover, theologians note that the death penalties prescribed in Leviticus—including for other acts modern Christians no longer punish—suggest that the laws were tailored to a specific covenantal community. With Christ's fulfillment of the law, the emphasis shifts from ritual purity to transformed relationship. This covenantal reinterpretation leads many Christians to affirm LGBTQ individuals without abandoning scriptural reverence.

5.4 LGBTQ-Affirming Churches and Denominations

Numerous Christian denominations now fully affirm LGBTQ people in membership, marriage, and ministry. These include the Episcopal Church (USA), the United Church of Christ, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Unitarian Universalist Association, and the Metropolitan Community Churches, among others. These bodies not only reinterpret Leviticus but often repudiate its moral application altogether in matters of sexual orientation.

Their theological frameworks prioritize the teachings of Jesus, the fruits of the Spirit, and the lived reality of LGBTQ Christians as evidence of God's inclusive grace. They frequently emphasize biblical themes such as justice, compassion, and liberation from oppression. In place of prohibitive readings, these churches read Leviticus as reflective of its own time, not as a permanent moral yardstick for the 21st century.

In Jewish contexts, LGBTQ-affirming synagogues thrive within the Reform, Reconstructionist, and some Conservative communities, often employing midrashic and halakhic techniques to reinterpret or neutralize the Levitical prohibitions. Across these traditions, the shift is not away

from scripture, but toward a new mode of reading it—one that values context, reason, and relationship alongside tradition.

6. Cultural Tensions and Institutional Power

The opposition to LGBTQ individuals based on Levitical law does not remain confined to theology—it spills into courts, classrooms, corporations, and culture wars. As societies wrestle with competing claims of religious freedom and equal rights, institutions of immense power—both religious and secular—shape the trajectory of public life. The tech industry, which has increasingly positioned itself as a leader in diversity and inclusion, finds itself both a haven for LGBTQ visibility and a target of moral criticism from conservative religious bodies. This section explores how scriptural opposition to homosexuality, particularly from Leviticus, fuels cultural tensions in three domains: legal rights, corporate identity, and political influence.

6.1 Religious Liberty vs Civil Rights

Perhaps the most enduring cultural conflict arising from Levitical opposition to LGBTQ identity is the legal tension between religious liberty and civil rights. In the United States, this debate often crystallizes around the First Amendment's protections for free exercise of religion and the Equal Protection Clause under the Fourteenth Amendment. When religious groups cite Leviticus as a moral basis for refusing to hire LGBTQ individuals, deny them services, or restrict their participation in religious life, civil society must determine whether such actions are protected expressions of belief or unlawful discrimination.

Landmark legal cases such as *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission* and *Fulton v. City of Philadelphia* illustrate this tension. In both, religious actors claimed the right to deny services to same-sex couples based on their scriptural convictions. Courts have issued mixed rulings, often affirming the sincerity of religious belief while emphasizing the limits of discrimination in public accommodations.

The core tension remains unresolved: Can a religious organization invoke Leviticus as moral truth and act accordingly, even when those actions result in the exclusion or harm of LGBTQ citizens? Or must public law supersede ancient religious codes when the two come into conflict? The persistence of Levitical language in moral argumentation ensures this legal and cultural debate will continue.

6.2 Tech Industry Diversity vs Moral Criticism

The technology sector, often viewed as progressive and globally minded, has invested heavily in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs. Many tech companies offer robust protections for LGBTQ employees, sponsor Pride events, and publicly advocate for inclusive legislation. Executives like Tim Cook and Sam Altman are not simply tolerated—they are celebrated as symbols of a modern, inclusive workplace.

Yet this corporate culture invites backlash from religious conservatives who view such visibility as normalization of sin. Groups citing Leviticus may condemn the tech industry not only for failing to uphold traditional values, but for actively promoting what they see as moral decay. Tech platforms that enforce anti-hate speech policies are sometimes accused of "persecuting Christians" or "silencing biblical truth," particularly when Levitical verses are flagged as discriminatory.

Some religious investors have even filed shareholder resolutions demanding changes to LGBTQ-inclusive corporate practices. Meanwhile, conservative commentators portray the tech industry as hostile to traditional religious values. Thus, Leviticus is not just a theological concern—it becomes a cultural weapon in the struggle over who defines morality in the public square.

6.3 Political Implications: Funding, Lobbying, and Law

The theological opposition to LGBTQ rights rooted in Leviticus does not remain within pulpits—it is translated into political influence through organized lobbying, campaign contributions, and policy advocacy. Groups such as the Family Research Council, Alliance Defending Freedom, and American Family Association frequently cite Levitical law (explicitly or implicitly) in their arguments against same-sex marriage, transgender protections, and school curricula that include LGBTQ content.

At the same time, LGBTQ advocacy organizations—many funded by tech leaders like Tim Gill and David Bohnett—mount legal challenges and support candidates committed to equality. This creates a political battleground where theological premises drive policy outcomes. In this context, citing Leviticus is not merely an expression of belief—it becomes an argument for shaping laws that govern others.

Internationally, this influence can be even more pronounced. U.S.-based evangelical groups have exported Leviticus-based moral codes to countries like Uganda, Nigeria, and Russia, where anti-LGBTQ legislation is framed as a return to biblical values. Conversely, global tech companies with inclusive policies often face bans or boycotts in those same countries.

In sum, Leviticus functions in this space not as an ancient curiosity but as a living scriptural authority invoked to structure public policy, control speech, and fund cultural warfare. The institutional power of those who cite it—across churches, courts, corporations, and legislatures—continues to shape the landscape of rights and recognition.

7. Conclusion

The invocation of Leviticus in modern opposition to LGBTQ individuals, particularly public figures in the tech industry, underscores the enduring power of ancient scripture to shape identity, legitimacy, and law. Far from being a relic of pre-modern theocracy, Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 remain cultural instruments—used by some to draw moral lines, and by others to question the role of religion in public life. The twelve individuals profiled in this paper, through their openness and influence, have come to represent a clash not merely between tradition and progress, but between rival claims to truth itself.

7.1 What Leviticus Still Signifies in Public Life

In contemporary discourse, Leviticus represents more than a religious text—it symbolizes a moral boundary for many communities. For adherents of strict biblical interpretation, Leviticus is a touchstone of divine law, a code not open to revision by modern sentiment. To cite Leviticus is to assert continuity with a sacred tradition and to resist cultural drift. For critics, however, Leviticus often signifies oppression, especially when deployed to marginalize or harm LGBTQ individuals. It evokes theocratic control, gendered double standards, and selective literalism.

This divergence is not limited to academic theology. It plays out in school board meetings, corporate policies, political platforms, and Supreme Court arguments. Leviticus becomes a proxy battle over what counts as moral, who gets to define sin, and whether ancient laws should govern pluralistic democracies. Its continued prominence illustrates how scripture, even when thousands of years old, remains central to contemporary conflicts over rights, recognition, and personhood.

7.2 The Enduring Divide: Scripture, Identity, and Legitimacy

At the core of this tension is a divide not just about sexuality, but about epistemology and authority. Religious groups who cite Leviticus do not merely disapprove of homosexuality; they often believe their stance is divinely mandated, unchangeable, and immune to cultural negotiation. On the other side, LGBTQ-affirming communities—including many religious ones—

interpret scripture as evolving, context-sensitive, and subordinate to broader ethical principles such as love, dignity, and justice.

This results in a collision of legitimacy. One side sees same-sex relationships as a violation of God's will; the other sees opposition as a betrayal of God's love. One reads Leviticus as timeless; the other as time-bound. These are not superficial disagreements—they are ontological, challenging the nature of truth, revelation, and what it means to live rightly. For LGBTQ public figures, this divide is not abstract. It shapes how they are received, resisted, or revered in different institutional settings.

7.3 Toward Deeper Dialogue or Permanent Polarization?

The question that remains is whether this divide can be bridged. Is there room for mutual understanding between those who treat Leviticus as immutable moral law and those who reject its applicability to modern sexual ethics? Can institutions develop frameworks that protect religious freedom while ensuring the full inclusion and dignity of LGBTQ citizens? Or has the battle over Leviticus become symbolic of a broader cultural schism—one in which dialogue is drowned out by dogma?

Some signs of hope exist: interfaith dialogues, queer-affirming interpretations from within religious traditions, and evolving legal frameworks that seek balance. But the risk of deepening polarization remains high, especially as scripture is increasingly wielded not for spiritual formation but for political leverage. The danger is that Leviticus, instead of guiding holy living, becomes a blunt instrument in a zero-sum war over cultural power.

For now, the verse stands—immutable to some, reinterpreted by others, and a test of moral posture for all. Whether it becomes a point of reconciliation or a lasting wedge will depend not only on how it is read, but on who is willing to listen, and whose humanity is allowed to shape the conversation.

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The author has published over 4,900 AI-assisted papers at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Douglas-Youvan/research . Google Scholar has indexed these preprints, and if you want a particular reference, the AI mode of a Google search (Gemini) has efficiently catalogued these preprints.

Leviticus vs. LGBTQ
Scriptural Conflict in Technology and Faith
Leviticus
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it is an abominasion, Leviticus 18:22